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CARL LUMHOLTZ IN TRAVELLING COSTUME.

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A RESIDENCE AMONG THE NATIVES OF
AUSTRALIA.

BY

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During my four years' stay, from 1880 to 1884, in Australia, where I was sent by the University of Christiania to study the fauna and the aborigines of that continent, I had the opportunity of living for about twelve months among the cannibals in the northeastern district of Queensland, very often in parts where no white man had ever before put his foot. It is chiefly about my experience among these people that I intend to tell you to-night, but I must necessarily trouble you with a short introduction about the country itself, its scenery, its vegetation and its climate.

In Europe people seem to have very vague ideas about Australia and life out there. I recollect once being asked in Norway, my native country, whether forks and knives were used in Australia. Such a question alone shows how little people really know about that part of the world. They have no idea of the

wealth, the advanced state of civilization and the luxury to be found in the southern part of that continent. Australia is, above all, the land of minerals and pastures. I need hardly refer to its enormous amount of gold and to its millions of sheep and cattle, which supply the markets of the world. In the South you can get whatever you may want to make your life comfortable. Ladies have their dresses made in London and Paris. I remember having once at a race-course seen a lady with a dress that was said to cost £1000. But the farther north and the farther west we go, the more we get away from civilization, till, at last, we meet the lowest and most degraded type of humanity—a people in the most primitive and savage state of life—a people whose highest conception of numbers does not extend beyond 5.

You may compare Australia with a gigantic dinner-plate. The interior is a flat country of medium height (300 to 2,150 feet), rising towards the border. The edge of the "plate" is highest in the S. E., where, in the Mount Kosciusko Range, Mount Townsend rises to 7,059 feet above the level of the sea. Very distinct is the edge of the "plate" along the eastern coast, where stretches a continuous, although not very high, mountainous country, from Victoria through the eastern part of New South Wales and Queensland into the York peninsula, which bounds the great Carpentarian Gulf towards the East. The whole mountain district is by the Australian geographers (*e. g.* G. Sutherland,) called by the common name of the "Great Dividing Range." The single parts of this mountain ridge have different names, *e. g.* the Australian Alps, where Vic-

toria and New South Wales meet together, and the Blue Mountains west of Sydney.

Round the lower part of the Carpentarian Gulf and in a part of the southern district of Australia the "edge of the plate" is broken, and low and flat country here stretches from the sea far into the interior. On the other side rises from the "bottom of the plate" in Central Australia some higher land, which, however, nowhere so far as is known reaches 3000 feet.

This Dividing Range stretches along the eastern coast of Australia at a distance of from 50 to some 300 miles inland. It forms, as a rule, the watershed between the eastern and western waters, but there are chains of mountains visible from the coast that often are of greater elevation than the range itself, such as the above-mentioned Blue Mountains, where the streams, on their way to the Pacific, break through the mountains in picturesque chasms. The Dividing Range is sometimes not very easily traced. The spurs coming from it, as well as detached mountains near the coast, are often much higher and are frequently taken for the main range. This range, by throwing off rain and creating streams, has made the eastern part of Australia far more fertile than the western.

Layers from the coal period have a great extension in Queensland, and the northeastern part of New South Wales; so Australia, besides her other mineral wealth, possesses also the "black diamonds." In several places strata from the mesozoic period of the earth's history have been traced.

The remains of animal and vegetable life found in the older strata agree as a whole with those found in other

parts of the world from the same periods. Once, however, during the mesozoic time, Australia must have been isolated as a continent by itself. This plainly appears during the tertiary period ; during this, most part of Australia seems to have remained an independent continent. This also was the case during the quaternary period or the geological present time.

Australia has no active volcanoes, but extinct ones are found in several places. Some of those that are to be found in Victoria must be considered to have had eruptions not long before the historical time.

This "Land of the Dawning," which, generally speaking, remains now as it was during the tertiary period, shows a corresponding primitive and peculiar fauna, as well as flora, with its proteacea, leafless casuarina-trees and acacias, which remind you of the extinct vegetation of the older tertiary period. The greater part of the Australian mammals consist of the curious marsupials which belong to the oldest and lowest organized of all known mammals, and which have, without doubt, remained from an earlier geological period, during which they also lived in Europe. Here are also found the two most remarkable mammals on the globe : the duck-bill (*ornithorhynchus anatinus*) and the spiny anteater (*echidna*), which, it has lately been proved, lay eggs and afterwards suckle the young. Among the birds, the country has some peculiar species (*megapodidae*), the only ones upon the earth, which do not themselves hatch their eggs, but, like the reptiles, bury them in hot sand or in hills of earth, the fermenting ingredients of which by producing heat, hatch the eggs.

The class of mammals gives the Australian fauna its

characteristic appearance. Imagine a continent almost of the size of Europe without any mammals, except marsupials, besides some bats, rats and mice. There are none of those species from which our domestic animals have been developed.

The marsupials appear in some parts of Australia in countless numbers, and are very destructive to the grass. From 1880 to 1885 the Government of Queensland paid premiums for five million heads of the larger marsupials.

I undertook two journeys of importance during my stay in Australia. The first one was to the interior of Queensland, from Rockhampton, under the Tropic of Capricorn, about 800 miles west. Near the coast the climate is naturally more moist and the landscape sometimes even approaching to the picturesque. But as a rule the Australian landscape is more grotesque than beautiful, and it has a marked look of melancholy about it. The farther you go west the more does the whole scenery assume a dry aspect. In western Queensland they think nothing of it if they have no rain for eight or ten months. The grass is gray almost all the year round, but still this undulating country, the so-called downs, forms splendid pastures for hundreds of thousands of sheep and cattle; and the squatters store the rain-water in dams, and thus preserve it for one and even two years. Western Queensland, near Diamantina River, is one of the hottest places in the whole of Australia, the thermometer having registered 125° in the shade for three consecutive days. The air is so dry that perspiration is not felt. The soil is a rich, chocolate-colored deposit of clay, and it is a general belief that the large western country will in a short time, by means

of artificial irrigation, become a great wheat-producing country. Artesian wells have recently been bored in several places. In 1887, *e. g.*, water as clear as crystal and perfectly fresh was struck at a depth of 690 fathoms. In the 10-inch pipe it rushed up like a fountain, throwing up water at an estimate of 200,000 gallons a day. This was about 500 miles from the coast.

The other and by far the most interesting journey was to the delightful tropical regions of Northern Queensland.

In Northern Queensland the Dividing Range attains a height of 2,400 feet, and in consequence of the heat and moist climate the mountains are covered with dense brushwood—which the Australians call scrub—of enormous extent and great luxuriance,—a complete contrast to the ordinary Australian landscape, with its monotonous plains and its melancholy white-stemmed gum-trees (*eucalyptus*) and acacias scattered here and there. There are all sorts of trees and bushes in astounding number. Most noticeable is the Australian vine (*Calamus Australis*), twining along the trees, for hundreds of feet, through the forest, and sometimes rising in gigantic coils that make all passage impossible. One species of palm the colonists call by the not very poetic name of “Lawyer palm,” because its sharp thorns tear one’s clothes and draw blood from the skin. No less unpleasant is a huge stinging-nettle (*Laportea moroides*), whose beautiful heart-shaped leaves sting painfully. So poisonous are these leaves that their mere movement produces sneezing; whilst any one stung by them soon experiences an acute pain all up the arm as far as the lymphatic glands in the arm-pit. This is followed by dis-

turbed sleep at night, but no further unpleasant effects worth mentioning supervene. The antidote to this plant is, strange to say, always found in its immediate vicinity, in the same way as the kusso plant is found in Abyssinia, the native country of the tape-worm. That antidote is the sap of the *Colocasia macrorhiza*. Besides these troublesome plants, a large number of very useful and beautiful ones are met with in these regions, such as the fan-palm, the common Australian palm, the banana, etc. In the higher mountain regions, the gigantic tree-ferns grow in great splendor, their huge leaves broadening out over the transparent water of the brooks that trickle at their feet.

The water-supply of these mountain regions contrasts very strongly with the dryness of the Australian soil elsewhere. Here are any number of brooks, that now run into the most beautiful waterfalls, now flow into stately rivers. These rivers have, of necessity, a comparatively short course, but they carry for the most part a vast volume of water and they are accompanied by a dense undergrowth of jungle that extends to their very mouth. The soil in this region—along the rivers—is generally of incomparable fertility, and if the undergrowth is rooted up by the white settler, or more accurately, by his dependents, the Kanakas, the sugar-cane does wonderfully well. Tobacco and coffee also thrive well in this moist climate; only thus far, the right sort of tobacco to cultivate has not yet been found. In like manner, the cinchona plant, rice, arrow-root, everywhere thrive well in this region, but none of these plants is as yet cultivated, except on a very small scale.

The white settlers remain in the lowlands and never go up into the thickets of the mountain districts. Here, in natural conditions as yet unchanged, dwell the black aborigines, whom no white man cares to disturb. For they can find him neither gold, nor diamonds, nor anything else that would tempt him to encounter the difficulties of a journey to their haunts. I had, however, long wished to study these savages, the Australian aborigines, the lowest of the human race, in their actual conditions of life. For the ethnological student no phase of human life is as interesting as the most primitive one. And as you can get no reliable knowledge of a people except by living among them, so I made up my mind to live with the savages in their huts. A further inducement to risk the dangers connected with such a stay was my belief that by their help I could get many specimens of Australian fauna, which I should in no other way be able to procure.

Of course, I could not at once go and live with them, but had to work my way gradually. I had, then, been in Australia more than a year and, of course, had acquired some experience as to how to proceed with them. I first began to associate with the so-called civilized blacks, and through them, by degrees, became acquainted with other tribes, until at last, I lived with natives who were in the most primitive state of life and had never come into contact with a white man. By civilized blacks we generally understand such of the natives as have to some degree been affected by European culture; but the extent of their civilization may be briefly summed up thus—that a civilized black knows he will be shot dead if he kills a European, is

greatly addicted to tobacco, and is fond of wearing clothes which he considers more as an ornament than as a useful article.

The natives living around my headquarters at Herbert Vale had, during the last couple of years, commenced to visit the station every now and then, and thus they rightly deserved the name of civilized, although scarcely any of them possessed a single article of dress. Especially would they crowd into the station when old Walters, the keeper of the station-houses, and Nelly, an aboriginal girl who served us as cook, had killed a bullock. The bones and the intestines used to be their share, and this offal of civilization was considered such a delicacy, that they caught it eagerly with teeth and hands, and the possession of these valuable leavings was not decided without a general fight.

I followed these so-called civilized natives on their hunting expeditions, witnessed their fights and their dances, and grew familiar with their language and customs, until I found that I could venture further into the country and meet the more savage tribes. I therefore undertook several expeditions from my headquarters. The greatest trouble was to get the blacks to take part in my excursions ; for they are born idlers and have a fundamental objection to any kind of work. Luckily, in the last six or seven months of my stay in that region I happened to find a really good servant. He stuck to me, wherever I went, so that my position, from the time of his advent, grew much more favorable. He was by no means an ordinary black, but was possessed of a peculiar vein of *naïveté*, and so he often blurted out ideas and information of the greatest value.

In spite of this he was not at all free from the treachery characteristic of all the natives. Nevertheless, he was better than the others, and saved my life many a time. Of course, I dared not trust myself to him unreservedly, for all blacks are like children, the sport of caprice and the inspiration of the moment, and are especially prone to deceit. The pair of us were fortunate enough to find, as a rule, four or five of the blacks willing to go with us ; sometimes a whole tribe, with its women and children.

As far as this method was possible I rode alone, whilst my blacks went on in front, one of them leading my pack-horse. At the foot of the mountains a camp was pitched, and here the horses were left behind, whilst the saddles and bridles were placed in a tree, so that the wild dogs should not get at them. Then we went up the mountain on foot—the dense underwood there, of course, being impassable for horses. My provisions consisted of fourteen or fifteen pieces of ox-flesh, pickled and dried, with a small quantity of wheat flour to be baked into bread in the hot ashes, and some sugar. When these provisions were exhausted, which occurred pretty quickly, we lived, like the aborigines, on young snakes, lizards, larvæ, eggs, and the like. My outfit included a large, white, woollen blanket that was a standing wonder and a constant envy of the blacks. As soon as I unpacked it they made a clicking noise, expressive of delight, with their tongues, and roared out, “Tamin, tamin” (fat, fat)! Anything that is very good they call “fat.”

One of the most important things I brought with me was tobacco, a greater joy to the aborigines than the

very best food. At Herbert River the blacks did not know, before the arrival of the whites, of any stimulants at all. The tobacco served me instead of money, and for it they would do anything, even to selling their wives. Among these people tobacco is always smoked, never chewed, and I have often seen a mother, carrying a child on her back, hand it a pipe, at which the child would take a couple of puffs with apparent delight. They often used to send, in barter, small bits of tobacco, wrapped up in gum, to other tribes, and in that way tobacco is known among remote tribes who have never themselves come into contact with Europeans. Next to tobacco, my revolver was of the greatest importance to me. Very luckily the natives, who do not themselves possess even bows and arrows, have the greatest respect for fire-arms. It is, however, necessary to keep up your reputation as a good marksman, else you will soon lose their respect. Their astonishment is equally great when you hit a kangaroo in a resting position, or when you bring down a bird on the wing. They were especially afraid of my revolver, which they looked upon as inexhaustible. I made it my business to keep this fear constantly awake, and every night before creeping into my hut, I discharged the "baby-gun," as they called it, just in order to refresh their minds as to the existence of this dreadful weapon.

In the evenings, just before sunset, we pitched our camp and settled down for the night. I had a hut made by the natives every evening in their ordinary way. The huts are built in a few minutes and consist of palm-leaves stretched across a slight frame-work of boughs. They are about three to four feet high and have a large

opening on one side. I always had my hut made so long that I could lie down at full length, but the natives I generally found lying two to three closely huddled together with their feet projecting outside.

Happily for me I felt in the winter-time the cold at night, owing to the great contrast with the heat of the day-time, and in consequence I awoke several times every night and had to wake the blacks to keep the fire burning before our huts. This gave my men the impression that the white man slept but little and that he was always on the alert and had the baby-gun ready. It was necessary always to be on one's guard, as the blacks are of a very treacherous and cunning nature, and one of the most important precautions that a colonist learns to take, is, "never have a black fellow behind you." The natives never seem to lose their inherited impulses, as the following experience of a squatter on Thomson River will show. He had, one day, gone shooting with his black boy, and as he was walking through the forest in front of his servant, the latter clapped him on the shoulder and said: "Let me go in front of you and shoot; behind I feel too great a longing to kill you."

I had a good deal of unpleasantness and many troubles through their deceit and cunning, which often made me so tired and worried that I was on the point of giving up the expedition, but the thought of perhaps being able to make valuable discoveries in this strange and interesting country always kept my spirits up, and I must say that I was not disappointed, but have returned with interesting facts and specimens of natural history, new to science, and with an intimate knowledge of the life and habits of the Australian aborigines,—one of

those unfortunate races that are rapidly dying out. On the other hand I was cheered in my work by the many delightful impressions I received of the grand and splendid scenery around me on my wanderings, sights I shall never forget. When the tropical sun rose in the early morning above the lofty trees of the Australian forest and awakened nature with its bright, dazzling rays, or when the moon appeared above the mountain ridge and threw her pale light over the vast plains below, while the mystic voice of the night-birds rang out on the still atmosphere, there was a beauty over the landscape to which I could not possibly do justice if I were to attempt to describe it.

The Australian aborigines are generally called blacks, but their color is really chocolate-brown, which can be seen best when they go into the water. In the summer-time they dive down into every pond they meet on their way, not from any love of cleanliness, but to cool themselves off. In the winter they never bathe. Newly-born children are yellowish-brown, and rapidly turn darker as they grow older; those of two or three years are as dark of hue as the adults.

On the coast they are of rather small stature, but in the interior of medium size and sometimes even very tall. One man who was well known among the whites near Mulgen, in Central Queensland, attained a height of 7 feet. The aborigines are much less muscular than the Europeans, especially in the calf of the leg. Their bodily strength is, in consequence, decidedly less; yet they have an extraordinary command over their frames and they move with much dignity and grace. Their women have the pose and movements of ladies. The

whole build of an Australian is notably fine and finished, I had almost said elegant. One of their most striking features is the low forehead and the strongly marked projection above the eyes, pointing to the fact that their powers of perception are good. All evidence leads to the same conclusion. Their eyes are always dark, with the whites of a dirty yellowish hue and with the capillaries very marked, a peculiarity that gives to the face a wild look. The nose is flat and triangular, very narrow above, so that the eyes are placed very close together.

The fleshy nasal partition between the two nose-cavities (*septum*) is exceptionally strongly developed. The aborigines often perforate it and stick through it a peg as an ornament. My companions who, of course, had neither pockets nor pipe cases, were in some difficulty as to where they could best keep the clay pipes I had given them, but they soon found a safe place for their pipes by putting them, instead of the peg, through the hole in their nose.

Sometimes I came across men with almost Roman noses, and you might believe, especially in Northern Queensland, that an interbreeding had occurred with Papuans, who, as is well known, are very proud of their big noses. The cheekbones are very prominent; the mouth is large, open, and in many cases anything but beautiful. The teeth are white; regular and very powerful, but on account of the coarse food and from being used for many purposes for which a white man would not think of using his teeth, *e. g.*, biting off tough and thick branches, making tools, etc., they grow at last very sore and are worn down to the gums. The chin is tolerably short.

Hair and beard are jet-black ; the hair is not woolly but more or less wavy. Occasionally it is quite straight, but on the Herbert River this was a rare and exceptional case. When their hair begins to be troublesome to them by reason of its length, the blacks take a lighted brand from the fire and simply burn it off. Once at my headquarters I saw a young man cutting his hair with a blunt axe he had borrowed. Fragments of glass are used for the same purpose. Men and women wear their hair of equal length.

As a rule, they are an ugly race, but now and then really good-looking individuals occur, more especially among the men, who, in general, have better figures than the women. Yet even among the latter I have sometimes seen what I should call "black beauties."

Their hands were small, their feet dainty and well-shaped, and their insteps so high that one would involuntarily ask where in the world they could have acquired this distinctive mark of aristocratic descent. Sometimes the young women have excellent figures; their skin is as delicate as velvet. When those black daughters of Eve laugh, showing their incomparable white teeth, and cast coquettish glances from under their wavy hair, hanging in quite the modern fashion over their brows, it may be understood that these women are not quite deprived of that influence ascribed by Goethe to the fair sex generally. They age very early, though. And I must confess I can hardly imagine any human being more ugly than these old women, crouching over the fire and rubbing their bony limbs. They seem to have no muscles left; their stomachs are prominent, their skin wrinkled, their hair

grey and thin, their faces unusually ugly, so much the more as their eyes have almost disappeared. I often wondered why the men did not kill these old women who, I thought, were a great trouble to them, for I had seen that the Australian aborigines made short work with anything that gave them trouble or worry, but later I learned that the old women are rather useful than otherwise to the tribe. They are very clever in finding food, and not only do they support themselves and the weaker members of their sex, but I have also observed that they gave food to young men who were too lazy to find any for themselves.

The sense-organs of the aborigines are well-developed, and their sight especially is unusually acute. They can see, at a height of sixty feet or more, the Australian bees, which are smaller than our domestic flies, enter their nests in the trees. They can also stand the vertical sunlight much better than we. If an Australian black is digging any animal out of the ground, a handful of the soil held to his nose is enough to tell him if the animal he is in search of is at home or not. When he is going through the woods, he will take up, as he passes along, a handful of earth or a leaf in order to tell by the smell if any animal has passed that way.

The Australian aborigines are a healthy race and not very subject to disease, except in cases where they have become "civilized"—have taken to clothes—when disease begins among them. The Australian who, on the Herbert River, goes abroad quite unclothed, is, as I have already said, very proud of the possession of garments. But he regards them only as ornaments, and

takes them off when they are most needed. I have seen Australian natives, in the greatest heat of summer, sweating in woollen jackets, while in the cold nights they will be sure to take them off. As a consequence, colds and chest complaints result. But I have never seen a black catch cold as long as he was living in his natural conditions. Climatic fevers are just as rare among them. I only saw one native down with fever, and he was "civilized"—wore clothes, caught cold to start with, and then took fever.

The Herbert River blacks use no kind of medicine. The only thing they will sometimes do is to suck the blood from the part in pain, or to smear it over with their saliva.

Toothache occurs now and then among these people. If it is a back-tooth that is giving pain, the patient gets another black to suck blood from his cheek, much as we use leeches. If it is a front-tooth a very radical cure is sometimes employed. A sharpened piece of wood is placed against the tooth, another fellow strikes it, and the tooth is knocked out.

The aborigines are not so sensitive to pain as we, but they give in much quicker. If one of them gets even so slight a cut on one of his toes, he is at once a universal object of commiseration, and keeps at home in camp.

In my opinion the men live to a little over fifty, an age rarely attained by the women on account of the hard life they have to lead.

Like all savage people the Australians are much given to the adornment and painting of their bodies. Sometimes, especially at their dances and fights, they

besmear their whole body with red or yellow earth, or with powdered charcoal and fat, as if they were not black enough already. They also use cicatrices, or the scarring of their flesh, as an adornment for their bodies. For this purpose they make use of a sharp stone or a mussel-shell, with which they cut deep parallel lines all over their chest and abdomen. To prevent these wounds from healing, they sprinkle powdered charcoal or ashes into them, or sometimes they let ants run about in the wound, the result being that the lines will swell up in ridges as thick as a finger. This kind of ornamentation they consider very beautiful, and it is also indicative of a certain rank dependent upon the age. A little boy has no marks. In due time he is marked with lines. The number of these markings is increased as he grows older, and a crescentic line, with the points bent outwards, is drawn around the nipple. Only the men are thus decorated with marks of rank, while the women have some clumsy markings upon their breast and arms for decoration. Tattooing, as it is generally understood, by puncture of the skin with a pointed tool, is not employed by the Australians.

The languages of the natives of Australia are as various and numerous as the tribes into which they are divided, although upon a closer examination, it appears that all these languages are in some measure related to each other so that they may properly be styled dialects derived from one common source. Thus, for instance, the word for *eye*, "mill," has a very similar form all over the continent, and the same is the case with the word for *two*. As yet no definite kinship between this Australian language and any language outside of Aus-

tralia has been proved, although the theory has recently been advanced and supported by an apparent similarity in words and also in customs and superstitions, that in spite of difference in appearance, there exists some kinship between the African and the Australian negroes. Of a written language there is no trace, unless the message sticks by which they communicate one with another can be counted under this head. It has been stated that the Australians cannot pronounce the letter *s*. This is inaccurate. On the Herbert River, for instance, the word for tobacco (*soottoongo*), has an *s*-sound. The dialects of the Australian blacks are polysyllabic, and the accent is generally on the second or third syllable from the end. They have a by no means unpleasant sound, many words being notably musical, a music to which the abundance of vowels contributes. As to consonants, the gutturals predominate. In many cases a most imperative brevity is noticeable; a whole sentence often is condensed into one word. "Will you go with me?" is "*Nginta*," which in reality only means *you*, while a gesture completes the sentence. To this the answer is: "*Ngipa mittago*," meaning "I will go home"—literally, however, it means "I with respect to the hut."

This suffix "go," in order to avoid an extensive grammar, is much used, and is added to verbs for the purpose of inflecting them. On the Herbert River the aborigines have words for the three first numbers—*yongool*, *yackan*, *carbo*. Number four and all the others are to them *taggin*, *i. e.*, many. Their vocabulary is very limited. They have no general names, like *tree*, *bird*, *fish*, etc., but every single species has its own

name. Curiously enough they have words not only for the animals and plants, of which they make use themselves, but also for those for which they have no use or interest at all.

As they do not cultivate the ground and keep no domestic animals, they naturally do not want many implements. One of the most important is a long stick, which the women use for digging up roots, grubs, etc., and a stone or iron axe, which, of course, is also used as a weapon. They are clever with their fingers. Some strong and beautifully made baskets for carrying fruit, etc., are made by the men. Besides the axe or tomahawk, their weapons consist of spears, clubs, great wooden swords, shields, etc., but the most remarkable is the well-known boomerang. There are two kinds of boomerang, one, the returning, used only for amusement, while the other, that does not return, is used for killing game and in warfare. It has been asserted that the Egyptians and the Assyrians knew the boomerang, and the conclusion has been drawn that the Australians descended from a more developed race than the present one. It is, however, rather doubtful whether the Egyptian or Dravidian boomerang was the same as the Australian.

The low state of civilization of the Australian native is easily understood from a look at his weapons and implements. Most of them are wooden. At Herbert River the natives almost exclusively use spears in hunting, but when they are walking around in the extensive and thick brushwoods, they, as a rule, move about perfectly unarmed. If they get a glimpse of any animal, they break off a stick, and try to kill it by throwing at

it. Herein, as a rule, they succeed, as most of the animals live in the trees, and have a great difficulty in escaping when the natives from several sides climb up and encircle them. If an animal has been killed and is going to be prepared, the belly is opened with the first stone, or a suitable piece of hard wood, which may happen to be in the way. With a stone, or with their teeth, the men divide the prey among them. Their knives are flint-flakes, which they either find accidentally, or obtain by blasting a rock with fire and water, and in no case do they apply more work to them.

Thus the Australian aborigines may be said still to be in the palæolithic state, and they must even in some respects be considered not to be above, or perhaps even below, the men of the quaternary period.

The food of the blacks on Herbert River is chiefly vegetarian, although most of the vegetables they use are, in their uncooked state, positively poisonous, and require the most complicated preparation by means of roasting, beating, and soaking in water before they are fit to be eaten. Besides this, they eat a deal of flesh-food, such as opossums, lizards, snakes, and other animals. But they eat nothing raw; everything is cooked—not, be it noted, in boiling water, but by roasting in the hot cinders or ashes. The greatest delicacies, such as human flesh and big snakes, are cooked by placing the food between hot stones and green leaves in earth-mounds, just as clams are often baked. The flesh of the large lizards is really good, something like chicken in appearance and taste, but that of snakes makes a dry and tasteless dish.

Most of the animals eaten live in the trees; and the

natives naturally grow very clever in climbing trees. Those around Herbert River excel, in this respect, all the other Australians that I have seen. Also the honey of the wild Australian bee that is found high up in the trees is a valued article of food, and the natives sometimes even feed on it for days. Sometimes the honey has undergone fermentation and becomes sour—something, however, that does not offend the appetite of the natives. I used this honey myself instead of sugar to mix in water, thus making my frugal meals more enjoyable. The honey, however, always caused me, and often the natives, diarrhoea; which, I think, is rather an interesting fact, as I can eat any quantity of the domesticated bees' honey with perfect safety. Both this indigestibility of the Australian honey and its fermentation are due to the fact that these wild bees have no poison and only a rudimentary sting, the poison of the domesticated bee serving to make the honey digestible as well as to preserve it against undergoing fermentation.

The eggs of the brush-turkey (*talegalla*) are among the great delicacies of the blacks. They are prepared in a practical manner by being placed in hot ashes, so that they cook in their shells. Frequently the eggs are addled, but this makes no difference whatever to the natives—on the contrary, they prefer these to the new-laid ones. The eggs are then eaten with the help of a piece of cane, the end of which is chewed till it resembles a brush.

The blacks have also a great predilection for eggs of ants, for grasshoppers, and especially for the larvæ of some large species of *coleoptera* that live in the stems

of decaying trees (particularly *euranassa Australis*), and frequently attain the length and breadth of a finger, of dazzling whiteness and very fat. The natives cut them out of the tree with the aid of a stick or an axe, and are so delighted at the find that they cannot resist swallowing a few of them alive. The rest are placed in baskets and baked in the ashes ; they then become crisp. I convinced myself of their pleasant taste, and, strange as it may seem, I considered them a great delicacy, and certainly they formed the best food which the blacks could bring me. They are like an omelette, with a flavor of nuts.

When the natives come down to the grasslands, they are very fond of hunting wallabies by burning off the grass and spearing the animals.

I may also here mention an animal which I succeeded in finding, after three months' search, and which the natives also used for food—the tree kangaroo (*dendrolagus Lumholtzii*), one of the mammals new to science,—discovered by me during my stay in Australia. This animal is as big as a sheep and lives in the most inaccessible parts of the scrub-covered mountains, and is, therefore, very hard to get at.

The mutual relationship of the different tribes is still, on the whole, that of the lowest grade of the human race.

Among themselves they are kind and friendly, to such an extent, even, that they carry their sick members along with them on their expeditions and care for them, and this is really the only noble trait of their character I have been able to discover. To all outsiders they are, however, absolutely hostile, and woe to the black who should stray into the domain of another tribe. If he is

discovered, he is sure to be killed and eaten by his enemies. War still exists here in its original form, treacherous murder of single individuals and cowardly attacks from ambuscades upon small tribes. Never, at Herbert River, would a tribe dare to meet another in open fight.

It must also be mentioned that chiefs are never found among the blacks. Once or twice they asked me to lead their attacks upon other tribes ; but this was only for the occasion, because they thought that my gun would be of good effect upon their enemies. On important occasions the elders of the tribes are consulted ; occasionally, too, I saw them even take an old woman into their counsels. It is true she was very clever in procuring, with the aid of her husband, *talgoro* (human flesh) ; what wonder, then, that she was much looked up to ! In other Australian tribes there are chiefs ; sometimes even two, *e. g.*, near the Gulf of Carpentaria. But, it must be noted, the personal liberty is never interfered with ; if a man wants to remain at home when the tribe starts for an expedition he is always free to do so.

One of the ways in which they settle their differences is by means of the so-called *borboby* (a tournament), where about 200 or 300 persons from different tribes meet and settle disputes, not only between the tribes, but also between the individuals. Three or four times each summer they meet for *borbobies*. Several pairs fight, at the same time, regular duels with wooden swords and shields. The old women play a great part at the *borbobies*, by their inciting the men with jumping in the air and their wild, deafening howls—three or four standing behind each of the combatants. As soon as one is suc-

cumbing they hold their sticks protectingly over him against the sword of the victor.

With the exception of murder of a member of the same tribe, the Australian native does not consider anything as a crime except theft. However, infringement of the property right of another is not punished by society, but is settled between the individuals. The robbed one challenges the thief to a fight with wooden sword and shield, and the settlement takes place now in private, the relatives of both parties serving as witnesses, now publicly at the *borboby*. Whoever wins the fight is held to be in the right.

To steal women, also among these savages thought to be man's most valuable property, is the grossest but also the most common theft; for it is the common way of getting a wife among the Australians. So the *borbobies* are almost entirely fights about women, of whom a great number change hands on such occasions.

The public dances also bring several tribes together, but these are all friendly. The dance is conducted by fourteen to sixteen men, in ranks of four or five men. They march up and down with contortions and movements of the body in perfect time, while the orchestra, consisting of one single man, sings its monotonous air, accompanied by the clattering sound of wooden weapons beaten against each other. Only one woman takes part in the dance, jumping up and down on the same spot all night long, her arms outstretched and her fingers spread apart, and this is for her a great honor, of which the other women are highly envious.

In their other social relations within the tribe they are all on the same level. The more wives a man has,

the richer he is, for the women do all the work and attend to everything. Generally speaking, the Australian has not more than two or three wives; in individual cases, however, I saw as many as five following one man. The woman is nothing but a slave, whom her master may ill-use or kill if he likes. There are three ways of obtaining a wife: either through the woman being made over to the man, as a living inheritance, or by being bartered for a sister or a daughter, and it is a curious sight to see an Australian black go about with his wife, whom he is bringing up as a father might his child; or again, the common way of obtaining a wife, which is by conquest. The best looking women are most fought for, and the strongest man, of course, comes off victorious in the end. The old men, as the most respected ones, are always surrounded by the prettiest and youngest wives, and the young men have great difficulties and have to wait for years for their turn.

Of the education of the children there is no trace. The little ones are left to themselves, and they are allowed to do just as they like. As soon as the boy can walk he begins to play with the boomerang, and to smoke tobacco, and very soon conducts himself like a grown-up man. In mind he does not differ much from his father, for the adult Australian is really but a child in thought and deed.

To return now to cannibalism, already referred to. When the blacks do not have to keep up appearances before the whites, they make no secret of their love for human flesh. As soon as they come in communication with white men they deny it, because they see the white man, whom they always want to imitate, abhorring

human flesh, and chaffing them for this custom ; by and by they leave off the cannibalism altogether. Moreover it must not be supposed that they indulge in human flesh every day. During my whole stay at Herbert River only two blacks were killed and eaten. One of them was a young man who had ventured into the territory of another tribe and was surprised there ; the other an old man, was not able to escape quickly enough when his tribe was attacked ; he was beaten to death with stones, and his flesh was brought to Herbert Vale in baskets.

You must not imagine the cannibals more ugly and wild-looking than other savages. Certainly, the most daring and crafty ones go hunting for men, but a man-hunter may look very quiet and sociable. The meal is shared in by both men and women.

As a rule they do not eat any of their own tribe. I know of only two cases in which members of the tribe were partaken of, and in one of these a mother joined in devouring her own child, though Australian mothers are, on the whole, exceptionally gentle and kind to their little ones. In other parts of Australia, *e. g.*, near Moreton Bay, and south of the Gulf of Carpentaria, they eat the corpses of their relatives.

Generally an expedition of four or five men sets out for a man-hunt. A small tribe is watched for a long time from an ambush, and, as soon as they think themselves safe, the pursuers, some fine morning before day-break, set upon their victims, who never dream of offering any resistance. The men run away without troubling themselves about the women, who are left to make their escape the best way they can with their children.

The Australians do not like the flesh of the white man. It causes them nausea, they told me, as I learned when they had killed a white man near my headquarters and I asked them if they had eaten him. So, although during the latter part of my stay I was often in danger of being killed, I should never have been eaten, but my corpse it was their intention to leave in *ngallo*, *i. e.*, in the river.

There is no religious idea connected with their cannibalism, but human flesh is the greatest delicacy known to them. The Australian, however, has the superstitious belief that by eating the fat around the kidneys, which they consider the centre of life, the strength of the dead man will be transmitted to themselves, and that by carrying a small piece of human fat, wrapped up in grass, upon their person, they will have luck in their hunting expeditions. Next to the kidneys the thighs are the most relished part of the human body, but they never eat the head.

As an example of the degraded condition of the Australian natives, I may here cite the following case that occurred in the neighborhood of Herbert Vale. A young lad, twenty years old, called Mangola Maggi, who had frequently accompanied me on my expeditions, and to whom I had offered some tobacco as a reward for the cranium of a black who had lately been killed in a *borboby*, brought me one day a skull. I immediately saw that the one he had brought was not that of a full-grown man, and that there was a large hole on the top of the skull. When I asked him what had caused the hole, he answered that the dingos had begun to gnaw the dead body. My people, however, declared, that it

was the skull of a black whom Mangola had killed some time before. He had asked an old man with two pretty young wives for one of them, and the old man naturally refused this request. This angered Mangola so, that to avenge himself on the old man, he slew his young son, ate him, and tried to earn some tobacco by selling the skull to me.

The Australians generally bury their dead, but they always try to avoid having the corpses come in contact with the earth, so they cover the body with bark or something similar. Pretty common is also the custom of placing the corpses between bark and leaves upon a platform, where they are kept until they are gone to decay, whereupon the bones are buried in the earth. A kind of mummies too is found in Australia, dried by fire and smoke; old warriors especially are treated in this way; and the bodies of male children are also prepared in this manner. The body is packed up into a parcel and borne around for some time, even up to six months, by the mother; she carries it along wherever she goes, and at night sleeps beside it.

They entertain a vivid fear of the spirits of their dead, particularly of those of high rank; the spirits of those dead long ago they do not fear. As a whole, these children of nature do not seem able to abstract the human soul from the body, upon the presence of which their ideas about a future life seem to depend.

Sorcerers are highly dreaded; whenever a man dies from sickness, they always ascribe it to witchcraft wrought upon them by a hostile tribe, and this superstition is very effective in upholding the hostility between the tribes.

It now only remains for me to give a brief account of their religious ideas. These are, to say the least, very limited. As every one knows, there is no trace of idol-worship among the Australians : nor has any one observed them praying or sacrificing ; they confine themselves to fearing. At Herbert River they have not the faintest conception of a beneficent Supreme Being, but, on the other hand, they are afraid of an Evil Power, which may harm them ; their ideas about this Evil Power are, however, extremely confused. Sometimes they see it embodied in a cicada, which, on summer evenings, makes an uncanny noise—a noise that seems to come one knows not whence. But the Evil Spirit especially manifests itself to them in a night-bird, called the Quingan. I must confess that I have never heard so dismal a voice in any bird as in this one ; it always lurks in the most inaccessible mountain-districts, where it is difficult to get at it.

Of any sort of cult there are only the very faintest traces. Thus, boys when they attain manhood, are marked with two half-moon shaped marks on their breast. The wound is kept open and the scabs, before they peel off, are collected, placed in a very small basket, round his neck, and then carried into the forest and thrown away, as an offering to the Devil, evidently intended to appease his displeasure. Oddly enough, they are not, like other savage races, afraid of thunder and lightning. Of a future life they seem to have only a very vague conception. As I was once passing by a grave, over which a basket was hanging from a tree, I fancied I had come upon some dim idea of a future life ; that this was perhaps a custom, as with the Indians,

who place food and drink for the departed spirit over the grave. However, I received a very simple explanation. The parents of the child who lay buried there had themselves hung up the basket, because the child had been very dear to them, and they hoped to forget their grief if only the basket, in which they had formerly carried about their little one, were out of their sight. One of the last times I was with the blacks, the full-moon rose in all her glory above the palm-wood. I asked the people in their own tongue "Who made that?" The answer was: "Other blacks." Then when I spoke to them of the sun, I received an identical answer. They are also firmly convinced that they can make rain (*milka*). When we were overtaken on any of our expeditions by one of the great tropical showers, they were invariably angered at the blacks who had sent the rain.

The missionaries have tried, particularly in the southern part of the country, to convert the blacks; with but little success, however, as they have had to combat not only the disinclination of the blacks, but also the opposition of the whites.

The blacks who have been educated outside of their tribes from their childhood may advance pretty far in civilization, and learn to read, write, count, and sing. They also very easily learn to play cards, even such a difficult game as euchre. They advance farthest in the kind of work that daily occurs at the stations. In the house the women are much used, and a couple of them are, as a rule, found at every station. They make very able waiters, but poor cooks. As shepherds and stock-men they are very capable, and sometimes excel the whites.

With their innate fondness for change they always go from one master to another, even if they have no objection to their employers.

The government of Queensland has for the protection of the colonists against the natives organized what is called "the native police." It consists of blacks from other parts of Australia, who are, of course, natural enemies of those against whom they are to be used. They are uniformed, and armed with guns, and are splendid horsemen. They are commanded by a white man, called sub-inspector, and a white sergeant. In the same degree that colonization advances, they are however done away with. They have, even up to the last year, committed many outrages upon the natives, and therefore this institution has become very unpopular.

Although the Australian may advance so far in civilization as described above, it is a characteristic fact that he never can get into an independent position. He never lays anything aside and does not know how to make money. He never learns to become a trader, and he retains, when civilized, the decided disinclination for farming so characteristic of him in his natural condition. Not even in the easily earned revenue of grazing does he understand his own interest. A living sheep is an impossibility in the camp of the blacks, not to mention that the gold of the country is only a stone for them, even if they see the greedy digger grow rich by the search of this precious metal.

"When civilized nations come into contact with barbarians, then the struggle is but short except when a dangerous climate helps the native race."

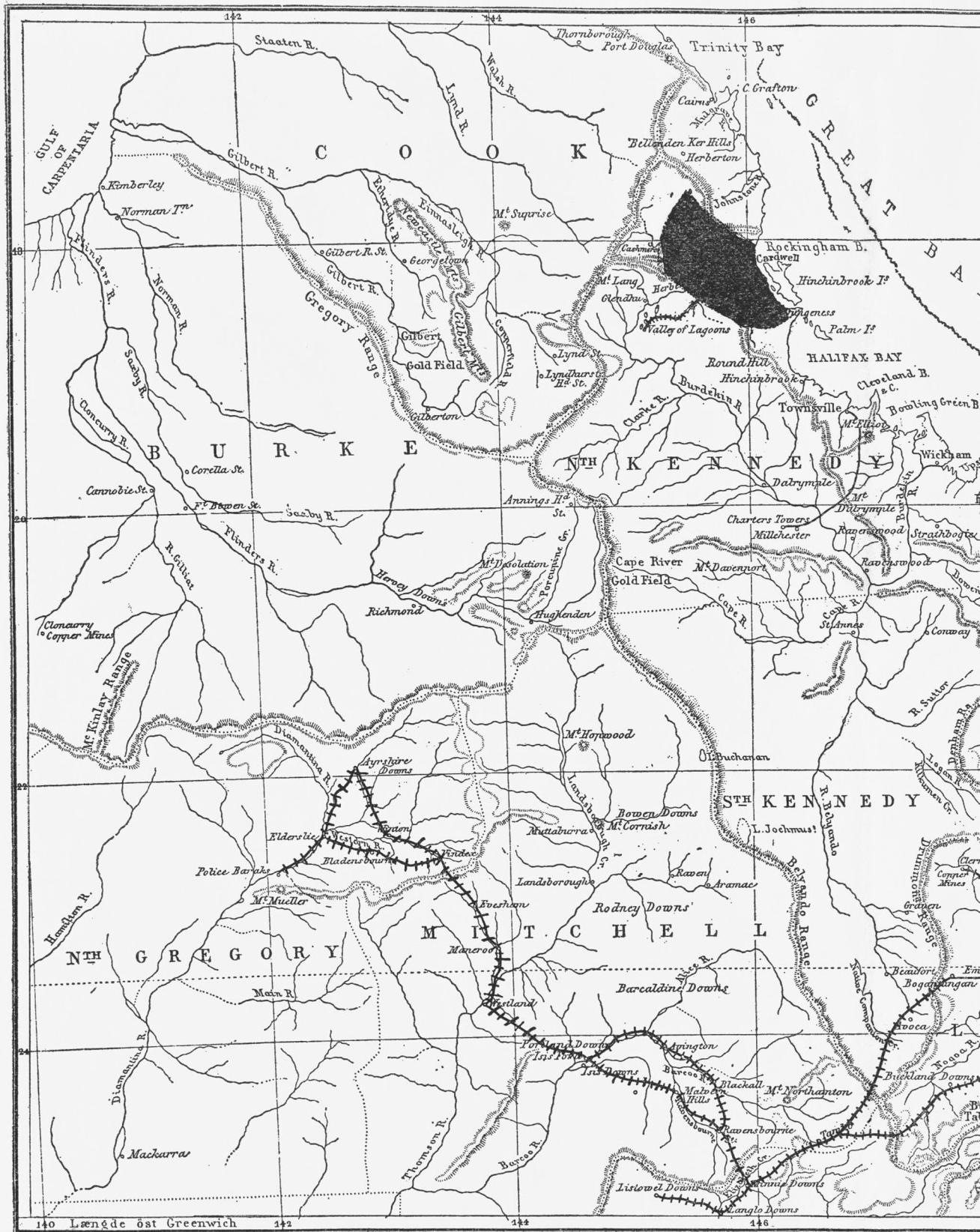
This statement of Darwin's is nowhere truer than of

the Australian blacks, whose days, so to say, are numbered. As civilization advances, their number dwindle day by day, in spite of the fact that the several governments at present do everything in their power to preserve them. When the Europeans first went to Victoria, according to one account, there were 9000 blacks, but now there are only some 750 under the protection of the Colonial Government. In the year 1881, the total number of aborigines in Australia was still about 31,700.

It would seem that the Australian blacks cannot live under civilization, and will not give up their old nomadic life. Truly, they adopt only the vices of civilized life, not its virtues and advantages. Moreover, it is only the roughest type of colonists with whom they first come into contact, and these are not likely to improve the natives in any way. They have taught the women to lead disorderly lives, and sterility is now almost universal among the more civilized tribes. In the coast districts they learn to drink brandy, while the Chinese supply them with opium. It is wonderful to see how rapidly these stimulants, especially the latter, make way with them. Occasionally, too, they are treated with the utmost cruelty by the whites—a cruelty sometimes justified by self-defence, but more often nothing but a wanton slaughter. The native police, too, has been a chief instrument in destroying the natives. It has not only killed great quantities of this unhappy people, but has also contributed greatly to their demoralization. Sometimes even arsenic has been put into their food by the settlers. Such atrocities committed upon the poor savages will ever remain a disgrace to humanity. The blacks in return commit outrages, too; and still, in

the civilized parts, oppose the invasion of the whites into their native country.

To civilization and Christianity the Australian aborigines have not proved susceptible, and to resist the advancing civilization is beyond their power; they remain therefore without future, without home, without hope—a doomed people. The two races cannot exist together. If natives attack the whites or their cattle, they are shot dead; if they try to be on friendly terms with the strangers, their destruction is no less certain. Taken all in all it is probable that within a few generations not a single Australian aboriginal will remain. Their fate will be that of the Tasmanians, the last of whom died some years ago; for these feebler races must succumb to the inexorable law.



MAP OF
CARL LUMHOLTZ¹
TRAVELS IN AUSTRALIA.

From the Danish original.

||||| INDICATES ROUTE.
BLACK SPOT—COUNTRY OF THE
CANNIBALS.

